

UCLA Faculty Association

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Sunday, February 23, 2025

It may seem off in the horizon, but the future lies ahead



Maybe you remember the scene above from the movie Chinatown. Or maybe you don't. But the future does lie ahead, including for the state budget. From an email by Jason Sisney of the Legislative Analyst's Office:

One of California's voter-approved marginal tax rates for higher-income personal income tax (PIT) filers expires at the end of 2030. Absent legislative or voter action to extend these taxes, the state budget then will lose perhaps more than \$10 billion of annual tax revenue. Compared to budgets under current tax law, deficits would increase by several billion dollars per year, and guaranteed school funding would decline by several billion dollars. From a perspective of prudent planning for tax and fiscal policy, a decision to extend the current taxes, modify them, or let them expire ideally would be made a few years prior to 2030...

Proposition 30 Approved in 2012. Proposition 30 was one of the key measures that boosted California state finances out of their Great Recession mess. Approved by 55% of voters at the November 2012 election, this initiative amended the State Constitution to temporarily increase the state sales tax for all taxpayers and personal income (PIT) tax rates for single filers with over \$250,000 of income and joint filers with over \$500,000 of income.

Proposition 55 Approved in 2016. In November 2016, a new initiative, Proposition 55, amended the State Constitution again to extend Proposition 30's PIT rate increases for upper-income taxpayers to 2030. (Proposition 55 did not extend Proposition 30's sales tax rate increase, which expired at the end of 2016.) Proposition 55 passed with approval by 63% of voters.

A drop in revenues by \$10 billion per annum would likely affect UC's budget allocation.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [State Budget](#), [UC budget crisis](#)

6 Sloan Fellows at UCLA

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UCLA's 2025 Sloan Fellows (clockwise from top left): Anton Bernshteyn, Hao Cao, Alvine Kamaha, Chuchu Zhang, Yotam Shem-Tov, Ernest Ryu.

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Anton Bernshteyn, Assistant professor of mathematics

Bernshteyn specializes in descriptive set theory (a branch of mathematical logic) and combinatorics, focusing on their interactions and connections to other fields, such as computer science and dynamical systems. Through his research, he aims to develop versatile tools that yield explicit, constructive solutions to combinatorial problems across various mathematical disciplines. In particular, he explores how techniques from distributed computing— the area of computer science concerned with decentralized networks — can be applied in descriptive set theory and beyond. Bernshteyn is the recipient of a National Science Foundation CAREER award.

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Hao Cao, Assistant professor of Earth, planetary and space sciences

Cao studies the origin, dynamics and impacts of planetary magnetic fields. He and his team analyze measurements from the NASA Juno mission to understand the deep interior and space environment of Jupiter and its Galilean satellites. In preparation for the arrival of the Europa Clipper mission at the Jupiter system, he is leading an interdisciplinary team investigating the coupled dynamics of the moon's space environment, ice shell and subsurface ocean. In addition, Cao and the UCLA MAG Lab are developing a temperature-controlled fluxgate magnetometer system for future space exploration, with application to lunar and Mars landers and to space missions to the Uranus and Neptune systems. He was awarded a NASA Group Achievement Award for his contribution to the magnetic field investigation of the Cassini mission to the Saturn system.

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Alvine Kamaha, Assistant professor of physics and astronomy

Kamaha's research is contributing to the ongoing worldwide effort to directly discover and probe the nature of dark matter. She joined the team assembling the state-of-the art LUX-ZEPLIN dark matter detector in 2018, and she co-led the successful effort to keep it free of contamination during its assembly and to install and commission the calibration system of the highly sensitive completed instrument. Since then, Kamaha and her colleagues have been collecting and analyzing data, as well as developing new calibration technologies to further improve the detector. This year, she was named a 2025 Cottrell Fellow and was recently the recipient of a DOE early career award, a Hellman Fellowship and the Edward A. Bouchet award.

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Ernest Ryu, Assistant professor of mathematics

Ryu is an applied mathematician working in the areas of optimization and machine learning. His research analyzes the family of acceleration mechanisms — of which the most commonly known are momentum-based techniques in machine learning optimizers — with the ambitious

- California Faculty Association (NEA)
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Topics

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 - San Diego Freeze

goal of formulating a grand unified theory of acceleration. Ryu is the recipient of the INFORMS Optimization Society Young Researchers Prize.

==

Yotam Shem-Tov, Assistant professor of economics

Shem-Tov studies labor economics, applied econometrics, and criminal justice and crime, including the impact incarceration has on individuals and families. His research leverages novel data sources and innovative empirical methods to understand why people charged, convicted and incarcerated often experience high rates of recidivism and low employment. His work also serves to inform policymakers and scholars about how alternative programs like restorative justice can lead to substantial and lasting reductions in recidivism rates and to support the design of programs that ensure successful reintegration into society after release from incarceration. Ultimately, his efforts aim to achieve a more effective and equitable system that balances public safety with rehabilitation.

==

Chuchu Zhang, Assistant professor of physiology and neurobiology

Nausea can be caused by an array of pathogens, poisons and diseases, but the sensory neuroscience behind it remains poorly understood, and the clinical management of nausea is often ineffective. Zhang's research focuses on uncovering the physiology, neural circuitry and molecular basis of nausea — including nausea caused by food allergies, food poisoning and pregnancy. By combining genetic tools with animal models and using imaging, electrophysiology, natural products screening and RNA sequencing, her laboratory is working to define stimulus-specific nausea mechanisms and to improve current treatments. Zhang is the recipient a Damon Runyon Research Fellowship and a National Institutes of Health BRAIN Pathway to Independence Award, and is an active member of the Leading Edge Fellows.

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Source: <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-most-sloan-research-fellows-for-public-universities-2025>.

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About the Sloan awards:

The two-year \$75,000 fellowships are awarded annually to early-career researchers whose creativity, innovation, and research accomplishments make them stand out as the next generation of leaders.

- Candidates must hold a Ph.D. or equivalent degree in chemistry, computer science, Earth system science, economics, mathematics, neuroscience, physics, or a related field.
- Candidates must be members of the faculty of a college, university, or other degree-granting institution in the U.S. or Canada.
- Candidates must be tenure-track, though untenured, as of September 15 of the nomination year.
- Candidate's faculty position must carry a regular teaching obligation.

The Sloan Research Fellowship Program recognizes and rewards outstanding early-career faculty who have the potential to revolutionize their fields of study.

Source: <https://sloan.org/fellowships>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM

No comments:



Labels: [UCLA](#)

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Lost Funding

- Is this really the hill UC wants to die on?
- Coming Not-So-Soon to an NIH Grant Near You
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- Stop - for now
- 3% Plus
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- Something Is Rescheduled to Happen - Part 2
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- Follow the (federal) Money
- Freezing-Unfreezing - Part 3
- The 15% Cap - Part 3
- The 15% Cap - Part 2
- Demolition - Part 3
- Slasher
- Demolition - Part 2
- UCLA Anderson Forecast on Cost of Fires



The [NY Times](#) provides a search option that allows information on how much NIH grant recipients would lose in fiscal year 2024 under a cap of 15% on indirect costs. Yours truly focused on UC in the table below. As can be seen, the total loss for all institutions in California is almost \$800 million, about half of which falls on UC:

Loss of NIH funding in fiscal 2024 if indirect costs limited to 15%.

=====	
University of California, San Francisco	-\$121 mil.
University of California, San Diego	-\$102 mil.
University of California, Los Angeles	-\$65 mil.
University of California, Davis	-\$49 mil.
University of California, Irvine	-\$41 mil.
University of California, Berkeley	-\$25 mil.
University of California, Santa Cruz	-\$7 mil.
University of California, Riverside	-\$7 mil.
University of California, Santa Barbara	-\$3 mil.
UC Lawrence Berkeley Lab	-\$6 mil.
University of California, Merced	-\$1 mil.
=====	
Total UC	-\$427 mil.
=====	
Total State of California	-\$796 mil.
=====	
Note: UC as percent of California	54%
=====	

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/02/13/upshot/nih-trump-funding-cuts.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM

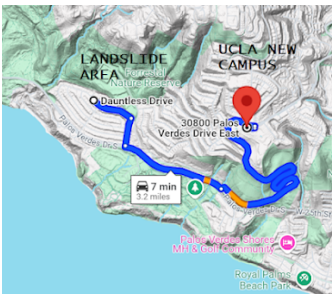
No comments:

Labels: [health care](#), [UC](#), [UC-Irvine](#), [UC-Merced](#), [UC-Riverside](#), [UC-San Diego](#), [UC-San Francisco](#), [UC-Santa Barbara](#), [UC-Santa Cruz](#), [UCLA](#)

Reminder: The \$80 Million Question

Last fall, we raised the question in some postings about the proximity of the campus of a defunct Catholic college that UCLA purchased for \$80 million in Palos Verdes. We have yet to hear how this hard-to-access campus - which originally accommodated only a few hundred students - is supposed to deal with the enrollment pressures UCLA faces.

The enrollment question was there from the beginning. But a later question arose as a landslide area developed not all that far from the campus. We have yet to hear anyone deal with that issue. But a recent [NY Times](#) article is a reminder:



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- 2023 (828)
- 2022 (719)
- 2021 (710)
- 2020 (914)
- 2019 (671)
- 2018 (595)
- 2017 (666)
- 2016 (715)
- 2015 (765)
- 2014 (704)
- 2013 (776)
- 2012 (839)
- 2011 (738)
- 2010 (431)
- 2009 (12)

- Contributors
- [California Policy Issues](#)
 - [Toby Higbie](#)
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Along the sparkling coast of Southern California, a string of landslides creeping toward the sea has transformed the wealthy community of Rancho Palos Verdes into a disaster zone. New data from a NASA plane shows the widening threat of these slow-moving landslides, which have destabilized homes, businesses, and infrastructure like roads and utilities. Researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory documented how the landslides have pushed westward, almost doubling in area since the state mapped them in 2007.

The landslides have also sped up in recent years. A month of aerial radar images taken by NASA in the fall revealed how land in the Palos Verdes Peninsula slid toward the ocean by as much as four inches each week between mid-September and mid-October. Before that, a city report showed more than a foot of weekly movement in July and August...

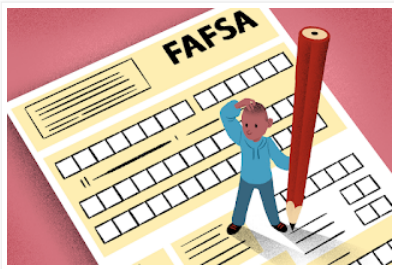
Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/02/18/climate/landslides-california-storm-map.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [enrollment](#), [UCLA](#)

Friday, February 21, 2025

Not safe



From the [NY Times](#): ...Earlier last week, the Education Department agreed in a joint stipulation to bar anyone detailed there after Jan. 19 from entering many of its databases until Monday, including its National Student Loan Data System.

Lawyers for the Trump administration had argued that whatever Mr. Musk's goals may be in scrutinizing the department's data, students who had turned over

their information for a loan had no right to prevent their information from being reanalyzed.

"I think it could very well be the case that folks, when they submit a FAFSA application, do not have those sorts of concrete expectations in mind," said Simon Jerome, a lawyer from the Justice Department. "I also don't think that the Privacy Act offers them a way into federal court to micromanage the executive branch's operation."

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/17/us/politics/doge-education-department-data.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [politics](#)

Deadline

The deadline to process and refund any 2024 excess contributions to participants from their UC Tax-Deferred 403b and/or 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan is Tuesday, April 15, 2025. **The properly submitted request MUST be received by UC Retirement Savings Program by Tuesday, April 1, 2025** in order for Fidelity to meet the distribution deadline of Tuesday, April 15, 2025.



Any participant who may have over-contributed (exceeded the IRS limits) to either Plan must contact Fidelity Retirement Services (1-866-682-7787) and request a Return of Excess Contribution form noting the specific Plan (copy of form attached for your reference). This year we have also added a downloadable form to myUCRetirement.com for easier access. The form must be completed, signed, enclosed with explanation and any supporting documentation, i.e., W2s, and then submitted to UC Retirement Savings Program (RSP) for review, approval, and submittal to Fidelity for processing. The form, along with any attachments, should be mailed or faxed (preferred) to:

UC Retirement Savings Program

P.O. Box 24570

Oakland, CA 94623-1570

SECURE FAX: 1-510-291-9945

More information:

<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/retirement-benefits/ucrs/index.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [uc retirement](#)

Thursday, February 20, 2025

Unclear



There is a saying among lawyers that goes something like "bad cases make bad law." And there is an item pending review at the systemwide Senate level that I suspect comes from a particular situation that arose somewhere in the UC system, leading someone to say that there ought to be a law. And now there is.

There is a proposal to add a step in the usually-mundane process of

providing a letter of recommendation for an former employee:

Any academic appointee who elects to provide an Official Letter of Recommendation to a current or former employee, which includes academic appointees, staff employees, as well as student employees, of the University of California is required to first consult with the appropriate entities to determine if the employee is a respondent in a sexual harassment complaint filed with the University.

An academic appointee is prohibited from providing an Official Letter of Recommendation, if it is determined the employee is a respondent in a sexual harassment complaint filed with the University, and any of the following has occurred:

- 1. The employee is determined in a final administrative decision to have committed sexual harassment.*
- 2. Before a final administrative decision is made, and while an investigation is pending, the employee resigns from their current position.*
- 3. The employee enters into a settlement with the University based on the allegations of the sexual harassment complaint.*

Note that this would apply to any faculty member who had a TA or RA, faculty members with grants who employed someone for any purpose under the grant, etc. It would also cover - as employees seeking letters of recommendation - students whose privacy is protected by law. So the former employer would be asking for information about a student that might arguably be seen as an invasion of privacy.

The author of the bill that seems to be the source of this proposal apparently realized that there are free speech issues involved in telling those in supervisory positions what they can or cannot

say. So the proposal continues:

Academic appointees, including emeriti faculty, may provide references or letters in a personal capacity, and the academic appointee is not required to consult with the appropriate entities to determine if the employee is a respondent in a sexual harassment complaint filed with the University. Personal references or letters of recommendation (that are not an Official Letter of Recommendation) written by current Administrators and Supervisors, as defined previously, are often perceived as being Official Letters of Recommendation by virtue of their position. It is essential that Administrators and Supervisors include the language for Personal Letters of Recommendation in APM - 036-0 f. so that it is clear their letter represents their own personal perspective of the employee who is requesting the reference. References or letters of recommendation written by former Administrators and Supervisors may be written in an Official or a personal capacity (APM - 036-0 f.)

The distinction between official and personal seems (to yours truly) to be a rather ephemeral concept. If you were an outside employer asking for a reference, and you received a letter from a past supervisor at UC, would you really think that the letter was "official." What does that mean? Does it mean that the campus chancellor or the UC president or the Regents have somehow reviewed the case?

Former governor Jerry Brown once said something to the effect that every problem does not need a law. Undoubtedly, something egregious happened that triggered this issue. And the "solution" got written into law requiring UC to add something to its procedures.

Anyway, for better or worse, all of this can be found at:

https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/underreview/apm-036-review-january-2025.pdf.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [legislature](#), [politics](#), [UC](#)

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